

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 IGA-02 EB-07

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R 160830Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4825

INFO CINCPAC

DOD/ISA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 1254

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SN

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM

REF: STATE 051768

1. SUMMARY: INCREASED TRAINING COURSE COSTS UNDER FMS SALES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON USG AND GOS BILATERAL RELATIONS. GOS WILL CONTINUE TO SEND MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR COURSES ESPECIALLY DESIGNED TO TRAIN STUDENTS TO USE AND MAINTAIN UNIQUE EQUIPMENT OF U.S. ORIGIN, BUT WILL

PROBABLY CUT BACK ON SOME OF THE EDUCATIONAL COURSES WHICH WE REGARD AS BEING OF GREATER BENEFIT. GOS HAS ALREADY ALERTED EMBASSY THAT IT WILL RECOUP THE INCREASED CHARGES FOR U.S. TRAINING BY ASSESSING CHARGES AGAINST U.S. NAVY USE OF SINGAPORE'S FACILITIES AND SERVICES. END SUMMARY.

2. SINGAPORE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN FMS COUNTRY. IT HAS NEVER RECEIVED ANY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, AID, GRANT OR OTHER SPECIAL TREATMENT. IN FACT, GOS IS PROUD OF THIS STATUS AND RECENTLY TURNED DOWN A DEA OFFER OF A RADIO EQUIPMENT GRANT FOR DRUG SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, MINDEF HAS ONLY A LIMITED BUDGET FOR FOREIGN MILITARY

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TRAINING. THIS LED TO A 1975 REQUEST FOR MAP TRAINING

WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN BY GOS IN RESPONSE TO DAO ADVICE. WITHIN THE EXISTING LIMITED BUDGET, THEREFORE, WHEN A TRAINING COURSE PRICE IS DOUBLED OR TRIPLED, CUTS IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS TO BE TRAINED MUST BE MADE.

3. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS ARE KEYED TO AREAS OF CONCERN IN REFTEL:

A. BILATERAL RELATIONS: SINGAPORE SUFFERED THE OCCASION OF BEING THE FIRST COUNTRY TO HAVE A SPECIAL FOREIGN-ORIENTED TRAINING PROGRAM (COUNTERINSURGENCY SEMINAR) COSTED UNDER THE NEW DOD COMPUTATIONAL RULINGS. WHILE NO PRECISE PRICE WAS MENTIONED DURING THE DOD/STATE TEAM VISIT (CROWE MISSION) IN JULY, 1975, GOS ANTICIPATED THAT THE PREVAILING "FRIENDLY SPIRIT OF COOPERATION" WOULD ENSURE A REASONABLE PRICE. THE IMPACT OF A QUARTER-MILLION DOLLAR PRICE TAG FOR FOUR WEEKS OF SEMINAR WORK HAS HAD MAJOR REVERBERATIONS WITHIN GOS. DR. GOH (MINISTER OF DEFENSE) REJECTED THE PROGRAM ON THE GROUND THAT THE PRICE WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE TENOR OF THE TALKS WITH THE CROWE MISSION. HE WAS OVERRULED PERSONALLY BY PRIME MINISTER LEE, WHO INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT THE COURSE WOULD PROCEED BUT THAT HE WOULD FINANCE THIS PROGRAM AND OTHER MILITARY TRAINING BY CHARGES AGAINST THE U.S. NAVY FOR ITS VISITS AND SERVICES. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL POINTED STATEMENTS MADE TO EMBASSY OFFICERS AND ATTACHES RELATIVE TO THE UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH COST OF THE PROGRAM.

B. SPECIFIC COURSES OF GREATEST INTEREST TO GOS: GOS HAS BEEN MOVING CLOSER TO THE U.S. IN ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES OF OPERATION. ALTHOUGH WE PREFER STAFF COLLEGE AND WAR COLLEGE COURSES AND NAVY POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BUILDING A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH FORMER GRADUATES CURRENTLY IN HIGH MINDEF POSITIONS (WHO ALSO AGREE THESE COURSES ARE VERY IMPORTANT), THESE COURSES ARE VERY COSTLY. MINDEF, BECAUSE OF NEED FOR TRAINING IN UNIQUE EQUIPMENT OF U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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ORIGIN AND OTHER OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, MUST SEND WORKERS, MECHANICS AND TECHNICIANS TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF HANDLING AND OPERATING SUCH END ITEMS. THESE ESSENTIAL SKILL COURSES MUST BE FUNDED OFF THE TOP OF THE TRAINING BUDGET. ALTHOUGH GOS IS NOT ABANDONING EDUCATIONAL COURSES, BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS WILL NECESSARILY REQUIRE DIMINUTION IN NUMBER OF ATTENDEES AT MORE SPECIALIZED COURSES.

SPECIFICS HAVE NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED. ALTERNATIVE TRAINING CAN BE ACQUIRED FOR SENIOR/MID-GRADE STAFF IN EDUCATIONAL COURSES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AT CONCESSIONARY PRICES. TAIWAN IS SURE TO OFFER A FURTHER ALTERNATIVE AND INDIAN COURSES HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE AVAILABLE. CANADIAN ACTION UNKNOWN. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT COSTS OF TRAINING IN THE UK HAVE ALSO INCREASED.

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ACTION PM-04

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R 160830Z MAR 76
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 1254

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C. TYPES OF TRAINING OF GREATEST BENEFIT TO U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST: AS INDICATED PARA B, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT STAFF COLLEGE LEVEL INSTRUCTION, WHICH IS BROAD AND DEALS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT, DEFENSE STRATEGIES AND RAISES THE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY MAN FROM A TECHNICIAN TO A MANAGER, IS MOST VALUABLE TO U.S. BELIEVE OUR WORLDWIDE EXPERIENCE WITH THESE COURSES, SPECIFICALLY FT. LEAVENWORTH, SHOWS THAT THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH GRADUATES CAN PROVE OF INESTIMABLE POLITICAL VALUE. FURTHER, MINDEF HEAD OF TRAINING EXPRESSED TO ARMA THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THESE LONG COURSES IN THE U.S. HAVE A MUCH GREATER IMPACT ON OFFICERS THAN SIMILAR COURSES IN UK OR COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES. BELIEVE THIS IS DUE TO DYNAMIC NATURE OF U.S. TRAINING AND VAST OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDED IN THE U.S. AGAIN, THIS TYPE OF COURSE IS FMS FUNDED AND SUFFERS MOST UNDER BUDGET CONSTRAINTS.

D. FMS TRAINING TO BE ABANDONED: GOS HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON SPECIFIC COURSES TO BE DROPPED; HOWEVER, THE "ROUND OUT" COURSES THAT SOME WOULD FEEL ARE SUPERFICIAL WILL PROBABLY BE CUT. SUCH COURSES ARE FLIGHT SAFETY, MAINTENANCE PLANNING, INVENTORY CONTROL, SUPPLY SUBJECTS, ADMIN-TYPE COURSES. THE DAO FEELS THAT THESE ARE THE AREAS IN WHICH SAF IS PRESENTLY WEAKEST.

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E. OTHER TRAINING SITES: GOS CURRENTLY HAS OTHER OFFSHORE CONCESSIONARY ALTERNATIVES (AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND). AUSTRALIA TRANSPORTS UNITS AND CONDUCTS TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA AT NO COST (SIMILAR TO U.S. MAP TRAINING). GOS STUDENTS ENROLLED IN AUSTRALIA MAY TRAVEL IN RAAF AIRCRAFT AT NO COST. TAIWAN PROVIDES ASSISTANCE WITH TRAINING FACILITIES AT CONCESSIONARY PRICES. DAO HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT FRANCE WILL PROVIDE GRANT TRAINING AS AN INDUCEMENT TO ACQUIRING FRENCH-MADE MUNITIONS. OBVIOUSLY THE FRENCH LANGUAGE POSES A SERIOUS PROBLEM TO THIS OPTION SINCE SINGAPORE IS ENGLISH SPEAKING. DAO IS CONSTRAINED IN JUDGING BUDGET IMPACT ON MILITARY COMPETENCE RESULTING FROM SUCH TRAINING AS SAF HAS ALWAYS HAD STRONG COMMONWEALTH TIES AND IS A VERY YOUTHFUL FORCE. DAO BELIEVES THAT INTEREST IN U.S. MATERIEL AND THEREFORE ACQUISITIONS WILL CONTINUE AS MINDEF CONSIDERS USG/DOD BEST SUPPORT AND SERICE ORGANIZATION FOR ITEMS ACQUIRED. HOWEVER, SINCE THE TRAINING PACKAGE FORMS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF TOTAL WEAPONS SYSTEM ACQUISITION COST, ONE EFFECT OF INCREASED TRAINING COST WILL BE TO ESCALATE PRICE OF U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS.

F. GRANT TRAINING: NOT APPLICABLE. SINGAPORE PAYS CASH ONLY.

4. COMMENT: MINDEF OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED DISMAY AT INCREASED COSTS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES THE APPEAL OF THE QUALITY, DIVERSITY OF THE COURSES AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE U.S. EXPERIENCE WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT MINDEF OFFICIALS WHO ARE SEEKING TO BUILD A PROFESSIONAL MILITARY FORCE. UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE COURSES THAT WE FEEL ARE EITHER NECESSARY OR OF MOST POTENTIAL POLITICAL VALUE TO THE U.S. ARE OFTEN THOSE VERY COURSES WHICH HAVE APPRECIATED MOST AND WHICH ARE EASIEST FOR GOS TO REJECT. NOTWITHSTANDING GOS ABILITY TO PAY ITS WAY NOR THE REQUIREMENT OF CONGRESS TO RECAPTURE ALL DIRECT COSTS OF TRAINING, THE VERY HIGH PRICE CHARGED FOR THE SERVICES OF INDIVIDUALS (INCLUDING RETIREMENT PAY OF TRAINERS, ETC) WOULD SEEM TO INCREASE OUR VULNERABILITY TO SIMILAR RECAPTURE

PROCEDURES BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS FOR SERVICES

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